

Health in Your Hand

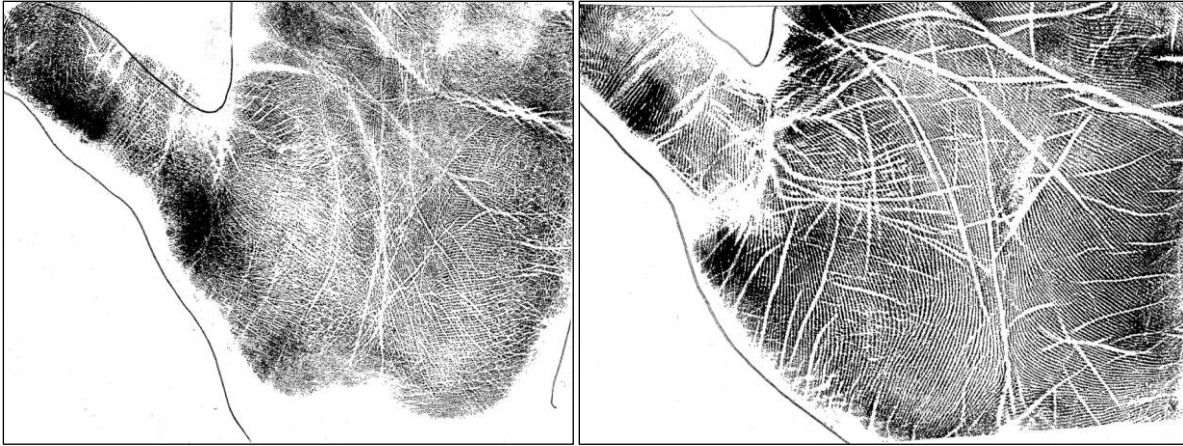
Nathaniel Altman

Try to imagine a personal computer that will help you to monitor your health throughout your life. It would provide information about your physical vitality and body strengths and weaknesses. It would evaluate and reveal the state of your heart and circulatory system, liver and intestines, and tell you the illnesses to which you may be predisposed. In essence, the computer would provide- based on character, heredity and present lifestyle habits- information on present and future health trends, which you can enhance or negate through diet, exercise, stress management and other habits.

Many of us would pay a high price for such a computer, but a growing number of physicians and medical researchers have discovered that we already own one: the computer is the body and the print-out is the human hand. Over the past few decades, doctors have taken a new look at the ancient science of palmistry as a guide towards understanding health and disease. In fact, in this decade alone, over two hundred articles have been published in reputable medical and scientific journals that attest that the lines, nails and skin ridge patterns (dermatoglyphics) of the human hand can aid in the diagnosis of literally dozens of diseases including cancer, glandular disorders, heart problems, chromosomal aberrations, and Alzheimer's disease. While the vast subject of medical palmistry cannot be adequately covered in an article such as this, here are the basic points to consider when we use the hand as a mirror of our health.

Skin Texture

If your skin is soft and fine, chances are you have a high degree of physical and emotional sensitivity regarding your surroundings. A course skin texture reveals a more "rough and tumble" individual who is not strongly influenced by external factors like temperature, pollution and noise. Dry, rough and scaly hands can indicate an underactive thyroid gland, while very warm, overly smooth and satiny hands can be a sign of an overactive thyroid. Cold and clammy hands are a sure sign of nervousness, both chronic and temporary, especially if you're about to have your hand read for the first time!



Fine skin texture.

Coarse skin texture.

Skin Color

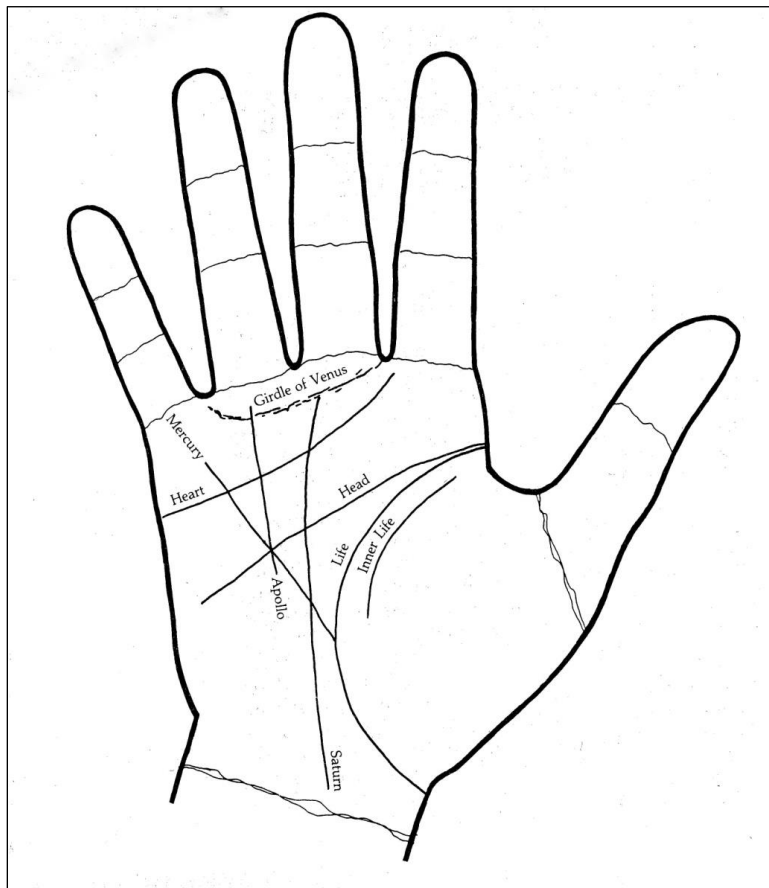
The normal color of the skin of the palm is rosy and pink (regardless of race), and attests to good blood circulation and proper body functioning. Extremely reddish hands can indicate high blood pressure, and a tendency for heart disease or stroke. Warm, bluish hands reveal poor blood circulation in general, possible heart problems and adverse drug reactions. If your hands are cold and bluish, the circulatory problem is more in the hand itself rather than in the body as a whole. Yellowish hands are more uncommon, and can indicate either liver disease. However, before you sound an alarm, remember that yellow hands are often found on people who drink large amounts of carrot juice over a long period of time.

Hand Consistency

The consistency of the hand is a good indicator of health because it shows the amount of energy we have at our disposal and how we use it. Flabby hands lack muscle tone and are often small, broad and soft to the touch. They often indicate laziness, poor will power and overindulgence. They also may reveal a weak constitution in general. Thin, flat and weak hands reveal a lack of energy and difficulty sustaining long-term activity. Firm hands are more muscular than others, and show a greater energy level, balance and self-responsibility. When accompanied by a large thumb-ball (known in palmistry as the Mount of Venus) the person has a passionate nature with a strong physical constitution. Such people often have good resistance to disease. Hard, inflexible hands are too firm to react to pressure and indicate an inflexible personality with lots of pent-up energy. Those with inflexible hands need to move this energy out constructively (such as in sports,

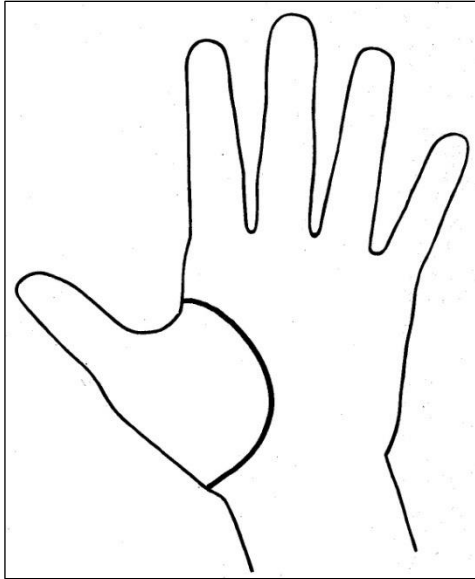
aerobics, gardening or other physical activities) to avoid stress-related disorders like hypertension, ulcers and back pain.

The Lines

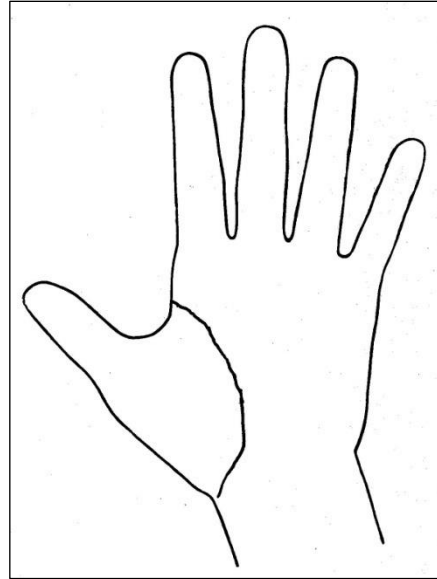


The major lines of the hand.

The lines of the hand- especially on the hand you write with- have a unique system of meaning and indicate emotional balance, vitality and vulnerability to physical traumas like illness or accident. For example, the life line (which begins where the thumb meets the index finger and moves down around the thumb ball) can reveal periods of low vitality, accidents, traumas and other events. A long, clear and deep life line indicates vitality and a strong constitution, while a short, thin or weak line reveals a weaker constitution and a greater vulnerability to disease. Islands on the life line can show periods of weakness or ill health, while red or blue dots on this line can be signs of serious illness or accident.

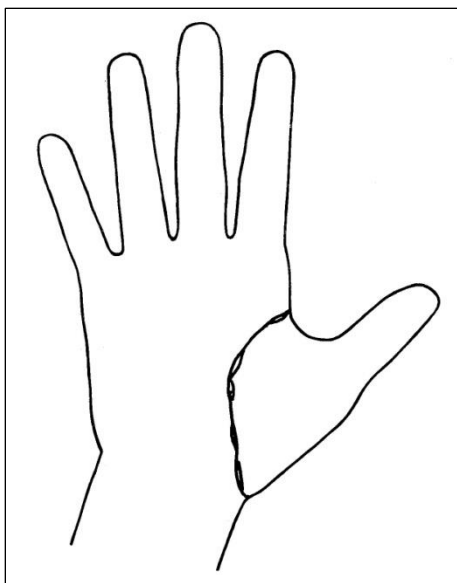


A long, strong life line.



A long, weak life line.

If a corresponding dot appears on the head, heart or stomach lines, the organ will likely be affected. In addition to reflecting the physical state of their corresponding organs, the size, shape and direction of the head and heart lines can reveal much about the way we think and feel. An islanded head line may be an indicator of psychological problems and difficulties in concentration, while a chained and broken heart line reveals powerful emotions and hypersensitivity. Red or blue dots on this line can be an indicator of heart disease, especially if they appear on the line on both hands.

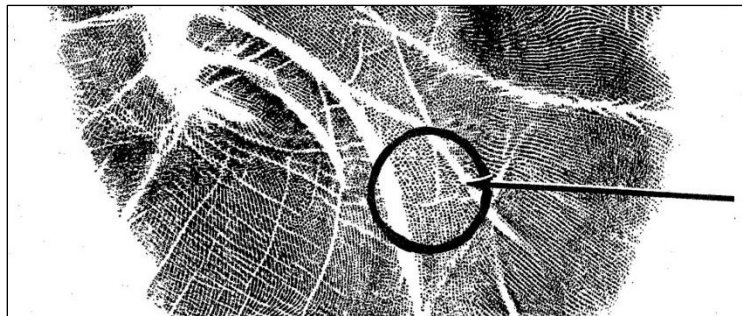


An islanded life line.

The abdomen and solar plexus have been called "the mirror of the emotions" and are especially sensitive to stress and pent-up feelings. The stomach line (or line of Mercury) reflects abdominal health, and is a good indicator of potential stomach problems and intestinal disorders. Beginning near the bottom of the life line and moving upwards towards the little finger, it is better not to have this line at all. If the line is broken or chained, ulcers, stomach cramps, colitis and other intestinal disorders are indicated. If the line is clear and strong, our resistance to abdominal problems- due either to physical or emotional factors- is greater.

Dermatoglyphics

Skin ridge patterns on the palms or fingers (dermatoglyphics) develop during the first four months after conception, and reveal much information about our genetic heritage. Dermatoglyphics has been of particular interest to medical researchers, and in the past 20 years, over 300 scientific papers have been presented on the subject. Abnormal skin ridge patterns have been linked to congenital diseases, including Down's syndrome, rubella syndrome, heart defects, mental and neurological disorders and even schizophrenia. Disassociated skin ridge patterns (known as the "string of pearls") can reveal a poor general state of health and/or severe emotional problems.



The "string of pearls skin ridge pattern.

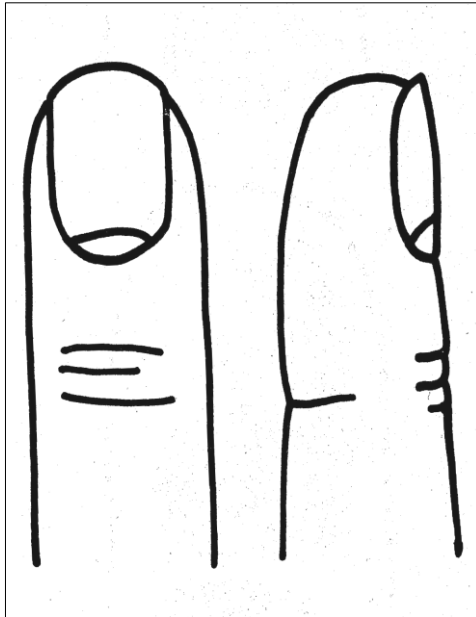
Nails: Their Unpolished Message

Doctors have studied the shape, color and size of the nails to diagnose disease for over fifty years. At least 65 different diseases can be measured by the nails alone. Although still an infant science, careful analysis of the nail can tell us much about our vitality and health, and offer important clues to our emotional nature and how it affects our health.

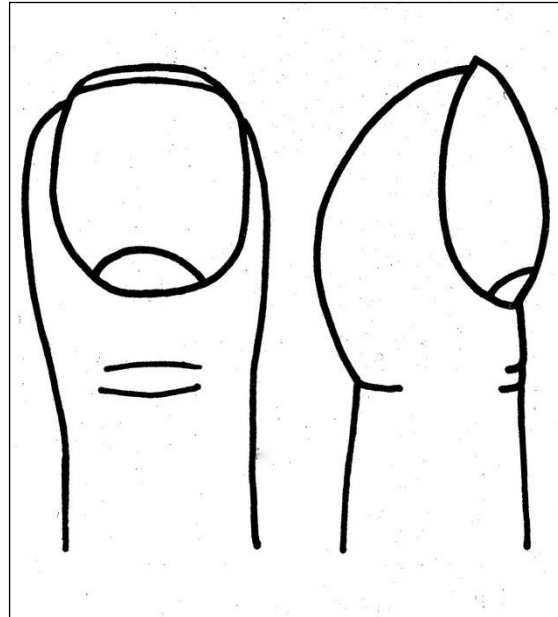
The "ideal" nail should be slightly longer than wide, more elastic than brittle, be gently curved and healthy pink in color. Pink nails, reveal good circulation, balanced nutrition and emotional balance. Reddish nails show an excess of blood circulation and can also indicate a tendency for flashes of anger, overexcitement and hypertension. People with reddish nails should avoid caffeine, stimulants and emotionally stressful activities. They should also learn how to deal with anger and frustration. Blue or bluish nails may indicate circulatory problems, or reveal a person whose warmth and passion are kept hidden under a facade of coolness and restraint. Pale nails- like pale skin- indicate low vitality and poor nutrition, while yellowish nails betray liver problems. White dots or spots are often signs of anxiety or stress, and can also indicate deficiencies of calcium or zinc.

Nail shape is also important. Nails in the shape of a watch crystal (called "Hippocratic nails") can indicate lung or heart disease, while nails that are concave in appearance ("spoon nails") can reveal iron deficiencies and an underactive thyroid gland.

Soft nails which split easily often indicate some kind of nutritional deficiency (especially in protein or calcium) and are often found on people suffering from arthritis. Broken or brittle nails can be a sign of an underactive thyroid or pituitary gland.

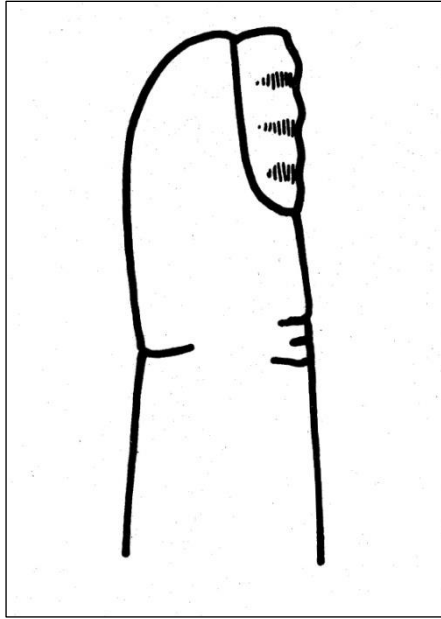


A normal nail.

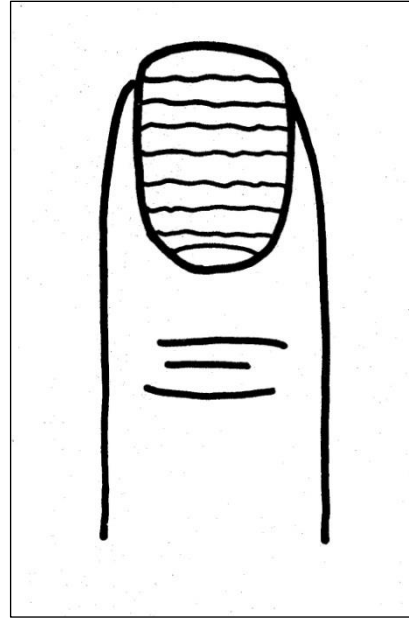


A Hippocratic nail.

Ideally, a healthy nail has perhaps a hundred shallow ridges from the base of the nail to the top. Beau's lines are deep horizontal ridges or "dents" which start at the root of the nail and move upwards as the nail grows. They are also associated with nervous shock, acute infections, nutritional deficiencies and emotional trauma. Mee's lines are similar to Beau's lines, except that they do not form dents on the nail surface. They are considered to indicate high fever, arsenic poisoning and coronary heart disease. Unlike Beau's or Mee's lines, well marked longitudinal ridges are often associated with more chronic diseases. A longitudinal ridge that has a beaded appearance, for example, reveals a tendency for rheumatoid arthritis.



Beau's Lines



Mee's Lines

While there is no foolproof method for diagnosing disease, medical palmistry can be of tremendous value- both alone and in conjunction with other diagnostic techniques- to make us aware of what prevents us from enjoying optimum health. Hand analysis can guide us towards taking personal responsibility for our health and adopt lifestyle habits that help us reach our maximum potential.

Nathaniel Altman has been reading hands for over fifty years. He is the author of over twenty published books, including *Medical Palmistry* (co-authored with Eugene Scheimann, M.D.), *Sexual Palmistry* and *Palmistry: The Universal Guide*, which contains 72 pages (seven chapters) devoted to medical palmistry.

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